(b) The main causes of the strikes *inter-alia* were related to settlement of wage revision *w.e.f.* 1.11.1997, privatisation/reduction of Government's shareholding' of public sector banks and introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS). The following remedial measures were taken.

The matter relating to the wage revision was amicably resolved by signing a Joint Note and Bipartite Settlement by IBA and industry level unions. On the question of privatisation of banks, it is proposed only to amend the Banking Companies (Acquisition & Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970/1980 with a view to modifying the stipulation of minimum prescribed Government shareholding in nationalised banks from 51% to 33%, to enable nationalised banks to raise capital from the market without affecting the public sector character of these banks. A Bill in this regard has been referred to the Standing Committee on Finance. As regards Voluntary Retirement Scheme, the same was voluntarily in nature and there was a good response from the employees.

(c) The Banks deal with the absence of employees on account of strike, under the principle of 'No work no pay' and deduct wages accordingly. Besides, disciplinary and other actions as warranted under the circumstances are also taken.

NPAs Against Private Steel Companies

1011. SHRI P. N. SIVA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, 'FIs, promoters busy restructuring steel loans to avoid NPAs' appearing in the Indian Express dated the 20th August, 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to recover the loan from the private steel companies due to which NPAs have accumulated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) Government has seen the news-item captioned "FIs Promoters busy restructuring steel

loans to avoid NPAs" appeared in the Indian Express dated 20th August, 2001. Steel industry is going through a difficult phase for various reasons such as non-materialisation of the projected demand, the glut in the international market and depreciation in the value of certain currencies. While the domestic steel prices slumped, various input costs continued to escalate. The problems were compounded by subdued capital market conditions due to which the companies were not able to mobilize the envisaged funds by way of equity and achieve financial closure. It was in this backdrop, the restructuring package has been considered for the large size steel projects by the Financial Institutions. However in accordance with the practices and usages customary amongst the banks and in conformity with provisions of statutes governing the financial institutions as also the provisions of the Public Financial Institutions (Obligations as to Fidelity and Secrecy) Act, 1983, the information in respect of the constituents of the Public Financial Institutions cannot be divulged.

Disbursal of loan to earthquake affected persons

1012. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a huge gap of some 60 crores between the loans sanctioned and those actually disbursed by the nationalised banks to the earthquake affected industrial and trading units and persons of Gujarat;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore; and

(c) the steps taken to narrow this gap to speed up the pace of rehabilitation work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) According to the information furnished by Dena Bank, Convenor bank of the State Level Banker's Committee (SLBC) for the State of Gujarat, the gap between total sanctions and disbursements made by banks to earthquake affected industrial units in Gujarat amounted to Rs.40.95 crores. This was mainly on account of want of disbursement of subsidy by the State Government.